

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 01949 061039Z

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1951

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E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OCLR, EAIR, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 24308 (B) MANILA 385

SUMMARY:

1. AMONG CLEARANCE PROBLEMS WITH WHICH EMBASSY HAS BEEN GRAPPLING IS NEW POLICY OF FIRST AIR DIVISION (UNIT WITHIN PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE RESPONSIBLE FOR AIR SECURITY AND HENCE FLIGHT CLEARANCES) OF SCRUTINIZING CLEARANCE REQUESTS INVOLVING TECHNICAL STOPS FOR REFUELING AND REJECTING THOSE WHICH IT REGARDS AS UNNECESSARY. RATIONALE IS FUEL CONSERVATION. POLICY NOT ONLY VIOLATES ICAO BUT IS ALSO BAD ECONOMICS. RECENT DFA REAFFIRMATION OF POLICY SUGGESTS MATTER SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARA 3 OF REFTEL A. END SUMMARY.

2. AIR FORCE HAS BEEN ORDERED TO CONSERVE FUEL, PARTICULARLY AVIATION GASOLINE, FOR WHICH CONSUMPTION RATE IS HIGH BECAUSE OF FIGHTING IN SOUTH. FIRST AIR DIVISION, WHICH HAS LONG CHAFED AT PRACTICE OF FOREIGN AIRCRAFT OF MAXIMIZING FUEL PURCHASES HERE BECAUSE OF CHEAP PHILIPPINE PRICES, INTERPRETED THIS AS GO-SIGNAL TO CUT OFF FUELING

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PAGE 02 MANILA 01949 061039Z

FOR ANY AIRCRAFT WHICH HAS RANGE TO BY-PASS PHILIPPINES.

FIRST AIR DIVISION BELIEVES AS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH THAT TO ALLOW FOREIGNERS TO BUY CHEAP PHILIPPINE GAS IS TO STEAL PHILIPPINE NATIONAL WEALTH, A SIMPLE MINDED VIEW-POINT WHICH DISREGARDS FACT THAT ALL PETROLEUM IS IMPORTED. PRICE PAID BY FOREIGN AIRCRAFT COVERS IMPORT COST AND PROCESSING COST SO THAT EVEN AT LOW PRICES PURCHASE CONSTITUTES AT WORST A WASH TRANSACTION IN WHICH PHILIPPINES GAINS NOTHING AND LOSES NOTHING.

3. IN AT LEAST TWO RECENT INSTANCES U.S. AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN DENIED CLEARANCE TO LAND FOR REFUELING. ON OF THESE WAS FLYING TIGER CHARTER ON DIRECT FLIGHT FROM GUAM TO BANGKOK. DENIAL FORCED LAST-MINUTE ROUTE CHANGE TO INCLUDE HONG KONG FOR REFUELING. ALTHOUGH FLYING TIGER HAD VALID CLEARANCE FOR PHILIPPINES, IT NEGLECTED IN CONFUSION TO AMEND CLEARANCE. ALTHOUGH FLYING TIGER IS CLEARLY AGGRIEVED PARTY, FIRST AIR DIVISION THROUGH DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE PROTESTING ROUTE CHANGE AS CLEARANCE VIOLATION. THIS DESPITE PERSONAL EXPLANATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES BY FLYING TIGER MANAGER.

4. PRIOR TO FLYING TIGER OCCURRENCE, FERRY FLIGHT OF DC-3 TO GUAM FROM SINGAPORE WAS DENIED BECAUSE AIRCRAFT INTENDED TO PROCEED MANILA BEFORE PROCEEDING MACTAN AND EASTWARDS. COMMANDING GENERAL OF FIRST AIR DIVISION STATED IN DISCUSSION OF THIS CLEARANCE THAT THERE WAS ACTUAL PHYSICAL SHORTAGE OF AVIATION GAS. EMBASSY SUBSEQUENTLY ESTABLISHED THIS IS NOT SO.

5. DC-3 CLEARANCE WAS ULTIMATELY GRANTED FOLLOWING ITS AGREEMENT TO CHANGE ROUTE TO OMIT MANILA. IN RESUBMITTING DC-3 REQUEST, EMBASSY ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OF EXPECTED DURATION OF ALLEGED FUEL SHORTAGE, POINTING OUT NECESSITY OF INFORMING AIRCRAFT OPERATORS IF IT WERE LIKELY TO BE FOR EXTENDED PERIOD. INASMUCH AS DAO HAD BEEN TOLD BY DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR LOGISTICS THAT POLICY WAS NONSENSICAL AND WOULD BE REVERSED, EMBASSY HAD HOPED THAT DFA WOULD IN ITS REPLY GRACEFULLY TERMINATE FUEL "SHORTAGE". INSTEAD, DFA HAS REPLIED AS FOLLOWS IN NOTE RECEIVED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MANILA 01949 061039Z

FEBRUARY 3: THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS--WITH REFERENCE TO THE EMBASSY'S NOTE NO. 956 DATED 22 DEC 1975 REQUESTING CLARIFICATION AS TO NATURE AND EXPECTED DURATION OF THE SHORTAGE AND FUEL TYPES INVOLVED, HAD THE HONOR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY THAT THE APPROPRIATE PHILIPPINE AUTHORITIES ARE UNABLE TO SPECIFY THE EXACT DURATION OF THE FUEL CRISIS AND THAT IN VIEW OF THE ACUTE SHORTAGE OF AVIATION GASOLINE, THE REFUELLING OF NON-SCHEDULED

FOREIGN REGISTERED AIRCRAFT AT THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT SHALL BE ALLOWED ONLY IN SUCH EXCEPTIONAL CASES
AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES."

6. DAO IS IN FURTHER CONTACT WITH DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF,
LOGISTICS, AND EMBASSY IS OPTIMISTIC THAT PROBLEM CAN
STILL BE RESOLVED WITHOUT FURTHER REFUSALS OF FOREGOING
NATURE. HOWEVER, SUGGEST WASHINGTON INCORPORATE
REFERENCE TO REFUELING NORMS IN ITS STATEMENT, WHICH
PORTION CAN BE EXCISED IF IT SHOULD BY THEN BE
UNNECESSARY.
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